Learning lessons from synthetic biology to develop cell-free biosensors

Simona Ranallo
University of Rome Tor Vergata
simona.ranallo@uniroma2.it

Synthetic biology has revolutionized our approach to understanding and engineering biological systems, offering innovative tools to create more robust and efficient biosensors. This lecture will explore how insights from synthetic biology are being applied to the development of cell-free biosensors, which operate independently of living cells. By leveraging engineered biological circuits, proteins, and DNA elements, these biosensors can be tailored for high specificity, stability, and sensitivity in detecting a variety of analytes, from environmental toxins to biomarkers of disease. Cell-free systems provide distinct advantages, including reduced risk of contamination, simplified storage, and faster response times compared to whole-cell systems. The discussion will delve into the latest advances in the design, optimization, and application of cell-free biosensors, showcasing their potential for rapid diagnostics, environmental monitoring, and biotechnology. Attendees will gain an understanding of the cross-disciplinary techniques involved, such as genetic engineering, circuit design, and molecular assembly, and how these can be harnessed to meet pressing global needs in healthcare and environmental protection.